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MAYOR

**City of Wisconsin Rapids Releases 2018 Executive Budget Proposal Highlights**

*Document Includes Request for Railroad Crossing Analysis*

The City of Wisconsin Rapids 2018 Executive Budget has been completed and submitted to the City Council for consideration. In accordance with State-imposed revenue limits, the proposed 2018 departmental operating budgets remain similar to those of 2017, maintaining existing service levels.

*Budget highlights include:*

**Aquatic Center development:** \$2.5 million in borrowing is proposed to complete the \$5 million pledged to the project in 2016. This will bring fundraising to 43%, with the balance to come from corporate, philanthropic and individual donations.

**Alexander Field Airport:** Despite continued infrastructure project investments requiring local matching funds, the local taxpayer subsidy from the four owner communities remains unchanged. The cost of infrastructure enhancements will be met as a result of new revenues from growing airport operations and associated fuel sales.

**Centralia Center:** *Lowell Center Garden* - Existing gardens are not user friendly for many patrons. Project support will also include association, individual and business donations. *Parking lot* - Now beyond its useful life, this lot will be redesigned with updated pedestrian accommodations, a relocated entrance and improved traffic flow, making it much safer.

**McMillan Memorial Library:** The budget provides capital to support a complete remodel of the heavily utilized main floor men's and women's restrooms, and the addition of a family restroom.

**Notable Public Works Construction Projects** include: High Street between 7th and 10th Avenues, and between 12th and 17th Avenues; Van Buren between 8th and 10th Avenues; Riverview Expressway/Lincoln Street/Daly Street traffic control improvements to fulfill agreement terms with Kwik Trip, and to address traffic concerns at Daly Street; and long-desired sidewalks on 10th Street (East side) between Wood and Grove, servicing many apartment complexes.

**Railroad Crossing Analysis:** Railroad crossings at Chase Street and West Grand Avenue experience extended blockages weekly - and, at times, daily - disrupting motorist travel, business operations and our overall quality of life. I propose allocating funds to analyze this situation and explore alternatives to improve the flow of traffic. I would suggest that the scope also consider quiet/no-whistle enhancements on west-side crossings.

"I am proud to present a budget that maintains all the municipal services our residents enjoy, while also funding various quality-of-life initiatives such as analyzing the disruption at our railroad crossings, and the city's commitment to a regional aquatic and activity center," said Mayor Zach Vruwink. "Our administration continues its commitment to meeting both the short-term and future needs of our citizens."

**Zachary J. Vruwink, Mayor**

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